

**WETLANDS RESERVE PROGRAM (WRP)
EASEMENT PROJECTS RANKING FORM
November 2006**

Applicant_____

County_____ Tract No._____ Easement: Perm _____
30-Year _____

ENVIRONMENTAL CRITERIA

TOTALS

I. Location

A. Proximity to Protected Wildlife Areas

- | | | |
|---|-----------|-------|
| 1. Project is within 1 mile of an existing WRP easement,
National Wildlife Refuge, Lands owned by the
Pennsylvania Game Commission, or similarly protected
wildlife areas | 20 points | _____ |
| 2. Project is within 2 miles of an existing WRP easement,
National Wildlife Refuge, Lands owned by the
Pennsylvania Game Commission, or similarly protected
wildlife areas | 10 points | _____ |

B. Proximity to Riparian Area

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|-------|
| 1. Adjoining | 5 points | _____ |
| 2. Less than or equal to 500 feet | 3 points | _____ |

Riparian Easement Multiplier – Use only if the WRP
Easement includes the riparian area.

--points _____ x 2 = _____

II. Size of Contiguous Easement

(round to whole acre)

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| A. Greater than or equal to 30 acres | 10 points | _____ |
| B. Between 25 and 29 acres | 6 points | _____ |
| C. Between 20 and 24 acres | 4 points | _____ |
| D. Between 10 and 19 acres | 2 points | _____ |

Add 1 point for every acre over 30 acres.

- maximum is 20 additional points ____ points _____

III. Hydrology

A. Hydric Soil Area to be Restored (% of hydric soil acreage that will not have hydrology restored)

- | | | |
|--------------|-----------|-------|
| 1. 80 – 100% | 10 points | _____ |
| 2. 60 – 79% | 6 points | _____ |
| 3. 40 – 59% | 2 points | _____ |

NOTES: Consider only hydric soil within easement
Include any recent wetland restoration,
but no existing natural wetlands.

B. Average Slope for the Restoration Area

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| 1. Less than or equal to 1.5% | 10 points | _____ |
| 2. Between 1.6 and 2.5% | 6 points | _____ |
| 3. Between 2.6 and 3.0% | 2 points | _____ |

NOTE: Projects should not exceed 4%

C. Saturated Soils Above Water Line Elevation

(Surface Area <1 ft. elev. above planned permanent water line, as % of Permanent Pool Area)

- | | | |
|---|-----------|-------|
| 1. Greater than or equal to 200% (2:1) | 10 points | _____ |
| 2. Greater than or equal to 100% (1:1) | 6 points | _____ |
| 3. Greater than or equal to 50% (0.5:1) | 2 points | _____ |

D. Source of Hydrology – Perennial Flow

- | | | |
|--|----------|-------|
| 1. Less than 25% of water from perennial flow | 6 points | _____ |
| 2. Greater than 25% and less than or equal to 50% of water from perennial flow | 4 points | _____ |
| 3. Greater than 50% of water from perennial flow | 2 points | _____ |

Surface Water Multiplier

Less than 10:1 Watershed Area to Pool Area

-- Points _____ x 3 = _____

Greater than or equal to 10:1 Watershed Area to Pool Area

-- Points _____ x 1 = _____

Greater than or equal to 20:1 Watershed Area to Pool Area

-- Points _____ x 0.5 = _____

IV. Buffer Included in Easement

(upland or existing natural wetland)

- | | | |
|---|----------|-------|
| A. Surrounds hydric soil area (95 – 100%) | 5 points | _____ |
| B. 75 – 94% of hydric soil perimeter | 4 points | _____ |
| C. 50 – 74% of hydric soil perimeter | 3 points | _____ |
| D. 25 – 49% of hydric soil perimeter | 2 points | _____ |

NOTE: Consider only hydric soil perimeters within easement

Buffer Width (average) Multiplier			
100 feet or more	-- points _____ x 3	=	_____
50 feet to 99 feet	-- points _____ x 2	=	_____

V. Vegetated Wetlands Expected in 10 Years

- A. Greater than or equal to 20% forested wetlands
(tree species) 5 points _____
- B. Greater than or equal to 20% shrub wetlands 5 points _____
- C. Less than 20% open water 5 points _____
- NOTE: Include points for each that applies

ECONOMIC CRITERIA

TOTALS

VI. Restoration Cost

(divide restoration cost by total easement area)

- A. Less than \$500 per acre 10 points _____
- B. \$500 – 749 per acre 6 points _____
- C. \$750 – 999 per acre 4 points _____
- D. \$1000 – 1250 per acre 2 points _____

NOTE: Projects should not exceed \$2000 per acre

VII. Landowner Contributions (including other non-Federal Sources)

- A. Easement Payment Reduction (Bids are Optional)
1. USDA Payment Reduced by $\geq 75\%$ 20 points _____
2. USDA Payment Reduced by $\geq 50\%$ 15 points _____
3. USDA Payment Reduced by $\geq 25\%$ 10 points _____
- B. Restoration
1. Greater than or equal to 40% 10 points _____
2. Greater than or equal to 25% 6 points _____
3. Greater than or equal to 10% 2 points _____

TOTAL SCORE _____

OTHER CRITERIA (check off)

___ Endangered Species ___ Coal Rights (controlled by bidder)

SIGNATURES _____

District Conservationist

FWS (or Representative) if available

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRP

EASEMENT PROJECT RANKING CRITERIA

November 2006

Applicant: The person or corporation who controls the land.

Tract No.: Only if FSA already has assigned a tract number. Persons enrolled in WRP will be required to comply with Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) and Food Security Act requirements.

Easement: Check one, Permanent or 30 – easement.

I. Location

A. Proximity to Protected Wildlife Lands: On location map, measure from edge of proposed WRP boundary to the boundary of the wildlife protected area.

Maximum score – 20 points

B. Proximity to Riparian Area: Measure from the edge of the proposed WRP easement boundary nearest to the stream to the edge of the natural riparian vegetation, or the edge of the stream if the riparian area is in agricultural use (pasture or cropland).

Multiplier: Certain Riparian Areas are eligible for WRP easements, these riparian areas may be up to 300 feet wide on each side of the stream (measured from the stream edge). In these instances the entire WRP easement will usually be contiguous (score of 5 points above).

Maximum score – 10 points

II. Size of Contiguous Easement: It is assumed there is only one easement area per tract (including buffers and riparian areas). If there are more than one, complete only one form per tract – list the actual acreage for each easement area in the margin and do not assign points for this criteria. The State Office will review and assign points.

Maximum score – 30 points

III. Hydrology

A. Hydric Soil Area to be restored: Evaluate only hydric soil within the proposed easement. Estimate the percentage of the hydric soil acreage that has hydrology or will have hydrology restored.

Maximum score – 10 points

B. Average Slope for Restoration Area: Projects on flatter slopes are more cost effective to restore.

Maximum Score – 10 points

C. Saturated Soils above Water Line Elevation: Projects that are on flatter slopes with fine textured soils will have a larger fringe of saturated soils. Estimate the land area that will be between the waters edge and up to one foot in elevation above the permanent pool. This fringe area is then compared to the proposed pool surface area (percent or ratio).

Maximum Score – 10 points

D. Source of Hydrology: Fluctuating hydrology provides more ecological diversity. Therefore, wetlands dominated by perennial (365 days a year) springs or streams, and/or large contributing watersheds (Multiplier) will be scored lower.

Maximum score – 18 points

IV. Buffer Included in Easement: Assign points only if uplands, existing wetlands, or riparian areas are included in addition to the degraded (or recently restored) hydric soils that make the site eligible for WRP. Consider only the perimeters of hydric soil areas that are within the proposed easement (ignore any portion of a hydric soil area that extends beyond the proposed easement). When there are more than one hydric soil areas within the easement, estimate the overall average perimeter that has a buffer.

Multiplier: Estimate the overall average width of the buffer area. Do not use the multiplier if the average is less than 50 feet.

Maximum score – 15 points

V. Vegetated Wetlands Expected in 10 Years: These are bonus points to be assigned if the landowner is interested in managing for these habitats and NRCS and FWS personnel are confident trees and/or shrubs will become established. Also, sites with a minimum of open water are more likely to develop woody habitat.

Maximum score – 15 points

VI. Restoration Cost: Use the total estimated restoration cost. Divide this cost by the entire proposed easement acreage.

Maximum score – 10 points

VII. Landowner Contributions

A. Easement Payment: LANDOWNERS ARE NOT REQUIRED TO 'BID'. If other Non-

Federal funds are provided from outside sources they may be credited to the landowner contribution. Use the county average farm values obtained from the National Agricultural Statistics Service. Contact Easement Program Manager for questions about specific county values.

NOTE: The Maximum Easement Values for 30-year easements are 25% less than for permanent easements. Landowners choosing 30-year easements are not credited for that first 25% reduction in USDA easement payment.

If the landowner wants a certain dollar amount per acre, divide that amount by the weighted average (weighted by acreage) of the USDA easement payment – this will convert the bid to percent.

Maximum score – 20 points

B. Restoration: If other Non-Federal funds are provided from outside sources they may be credited to the landowner contribution. Landowners with permanent easements are not required to contribute to restoration costs. Landowners choosing 30-year easements are required to contribute 25% of the restoration costs and are not assigned points for the first 25% contribution.

Maximum score – 10 points

OTHER CRITERIA: These will not be considered without documentation.

Endangered Species covers all Species of Special Concern, whether federal or state. Enrollees who do not control Coal Rights underlying the easement area will receive a lower priority.

SIGNATURES: NRCS, and a representative of the FWS if available, must be present on-site to complete this form. The District Conservationist must sign for NRCS.